AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Pleas replace paragraph [065] with the following amended paragraph.

[065] A field isolate Gram (+) bacterium, belonging to the genus *Bacillus*, was used in the fermentation process utilized to extract collagen from the tissues. A loop (approximately 10µl) of fresh bacterial culture was individually inoculated. The microorganism was cultured in nutrient medium at 37°C for 24 hours with constant shaking at 150 rpm. ~~A loop (approximately 10µl) of fresh bacterial culture was individually inoculated~~ The bacterial culture was transferred into four 125ml hinton flasks, with each containing 25ml nutrient medium, and allowed to grow for 24 hours with constant shaking at 250 rpm. The content of each flask was proportionally scaled up to 100ml and allowed to grow for another 24 hours. Prior to fermentation, bacterial culture from all four flasks were transferred to a 6-liter fermenter that contained 4 liters of nutrient medium and allowed to grow at 37°C for 24 hours. For the bacterial growth condition, the agitation and aeration rate were set at 450 rpm and 3 vvm, respectively.

Please replace paragraph [071] with the following amended paragraph.

[071] At this stage, the composition and purity of the collagen-containing solution prepared from avian tissues were analyzed by SDS-7.5% polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, see Figure 2 which shows the extracted α and β forms of the collagen and their respective weight. The α form of the [[is]] [[a]] collagen monomer [[which]] weighs around 95 – 100 kDa. The β form ~~is a polymer which~~ weighs around 200 kDa. The extracted collagens are well-preserved α and β forms weighing respectively

~~collagen monomers~~ around 100 to 200 kDa. The result shows more collagen monomers were extracted.

Please replace paragraph [076] with the following amended paragraph.

[076] Porcine collagen was extracted by dissolving the fermented tissues in an aqueous solution (3% w/v) containing 0.5M acetic acid (pH 3.0) and 0.4%~2% pepsin (w/v) with gentle stirring for not more than 48 hours, preferably 36 hours. After solubilization, the collagen-containing aqueous solution is filtered through active charcoal, followed by centrifugation at 5000 x g for 50 minutes and the collagen content of the acid soluble fraction was analyzed by 10% SDS-PAGE, see Figure 3 which shows α, β and γ forms of the extracted collagen and their respective molecular weight. Lane 1 contains 20 µg of porcine collagen; lane 2 contains 40 µg of porcine collagen; lane 3 contains 40 µg of commercial bovine; and lane 4 contains 20 µg of commercial bovine. Collagen monomers, α form[[,]] and ~~polymers~~[[,]] β form, were extracted weighing around 100 and 250 kDa respectively (Fluka pure bovine collagen was used as a reference).

Please replace paragraph [080] with the following amended paragraph.

[080] The insoluble tissues and debris were subsequently removed by centrifugation at 5000 X g for 50 minutes. The supernatant was removed and mixed gently with 5M NaCl and incubated undisturbed at 4°C overnight. The precipitated collagen was concentrated by centrifugation at 5000 X g for 50 minutes. The resulting supernatant was discarded and the pellet recovered for 8% SDS-PAGE, see Figure 4 Lanes 1 and 2 contain 10 µl and 20 µl of collagen respectively. Figure 4 shows collagen extracted with molecular weight around 100 kDa, characteristic of collagen monomers.

Please replace paragraph [084] with the following amended paragraph.

[084] The insoluble tissues and debris were subsequently removed by centrifugation at 5000 X g for 50 minutes. The supernatant was removed and mixed gently with 5M NaCl and incubated undisturbed at 4°C overnight. The precipitated collagen was concentrated by centrifugation at 5000 X g for 50 minutes. The resulting supernatant was discarded and the pellet recovered for 8% SDS-PAGE, see Figure 5. Lane 1 contains 5 µl of collagen; lane 2 contains 10 µl of collagen; lane 3 contains 20 µl of collagen; and lane 4 contains 40 µl of collagen. Figure 5 shows collagen monomers extracted with molecular weight around 100 kDa.

Please replace paragraph [087] with the following amended paragraph.

[087] Upon completion of fermentation, the fermented cartilage tissues were separated from the culture broth and washed with double distilled water. The fermented tissues were then dissolved in 3% w/v acidic solution (0.5M at pH3.0) containing 0.5M acetic acid (pH3.0) and 1% pepsin and incubated at 4°C for 48 hours. The insoluble tissues were then removed by centrifugation. The supernatant was then mixed gently with 5M NaCl and incubated at 4°C to precipitate the collagen. The supernatant was subsequently discarded and pellets were recovered for 8% SDS-PAGE analysis, see Figure 6. Lane 1 is the marker; lane 2 contains 5 µl of collagen; and lane 3 contains 10 µl of collagen. Figure 6 shows clear single band of around 100 kDa, which is characteristic of type II collagen. This feature is distinct from type I collagen which usually shows two single bands around 100 kDa.